

Stormy Night Punctuates Wet, Chilly Christmas Weekend

Fact Sheet

Event date: December 24-26, 2004

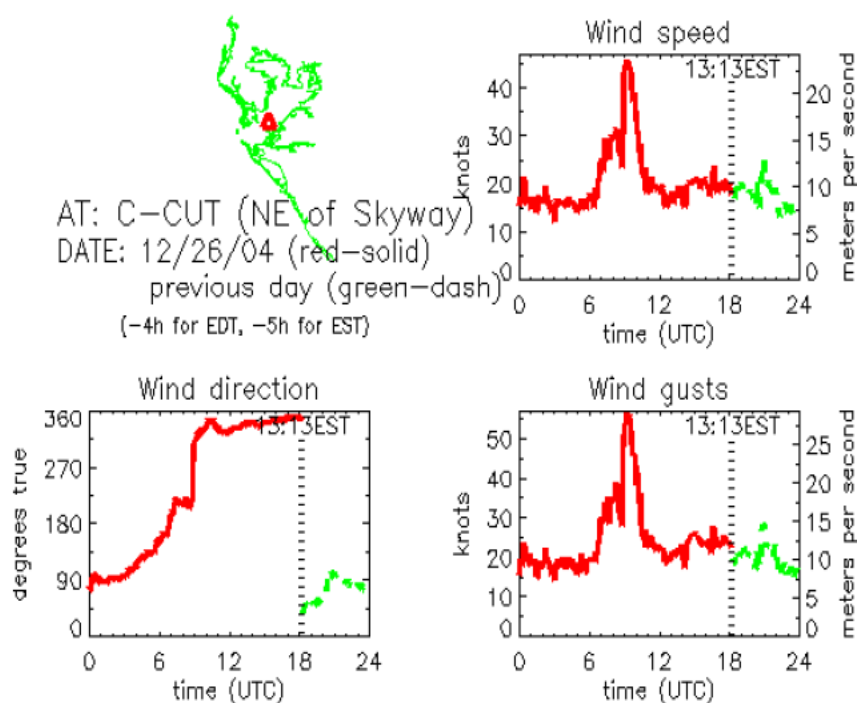


Figure 1. Peak winds at the C-Cut of the Sunshine Skyway bridge, around 4 AM on December 26, 2004.

Summary of event:

As the low center of this winter storm crossed the Tampa Bay area, the winds of 30 knots became briefly calm before bursting from the west at sustained values between 30 and 45 mph. Gusts as high as 71 mph were felt in Old Port of Tampa. These winds slammed water into the coast, particularly between Manatee and Pasco counties. Surges of 3-6 feet were reported, along with overwash, and some minor coastal flooding. Fortunately, the surges occurred as tides were decreasing between 4:00 and 6:30 am. Local utilities reported over 75,000 customers without power at 5:00 am. Roofs were blown off at several mobile home parks, boats were shoved off their moorings, marinas sustained some damage along the Manatee county shoreline, and dozens of trees were snapped, while a few others were uprooted. Most of the damage was near shorelines or in areas exposed to higher wind gusts.

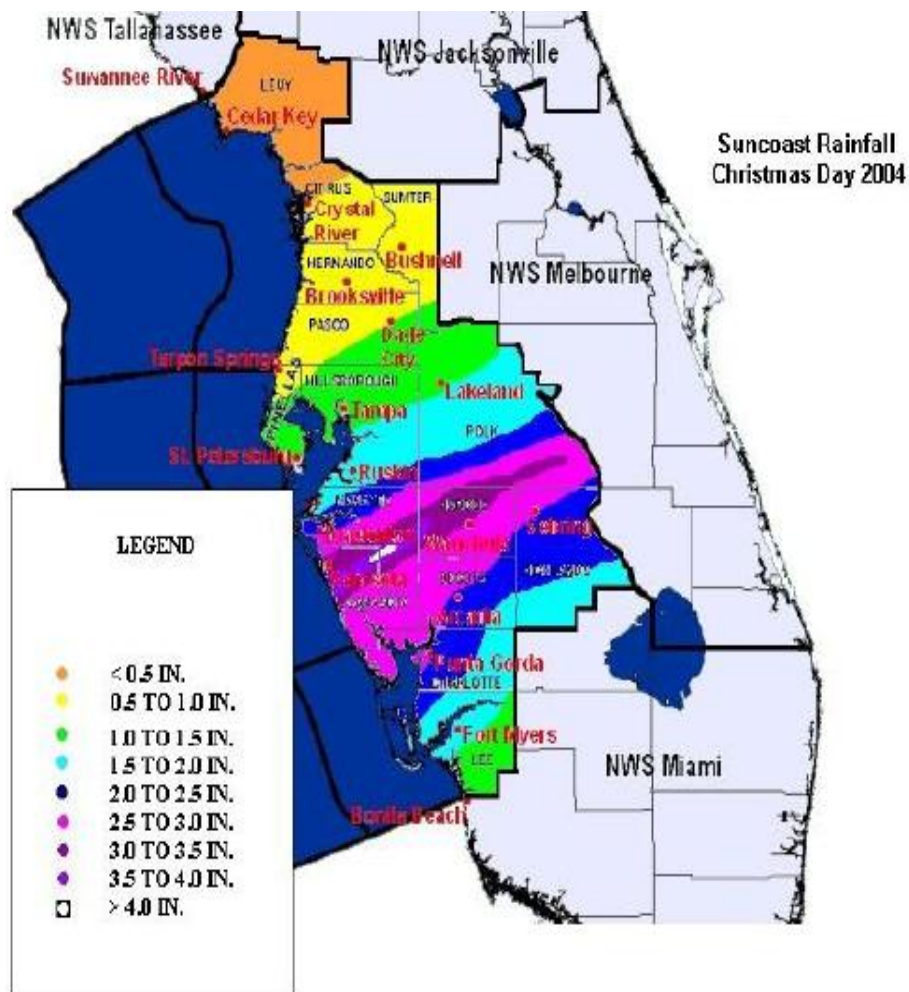


Figure 2. Rainfall from late on December 24, 2004 until early December 26, 2004.

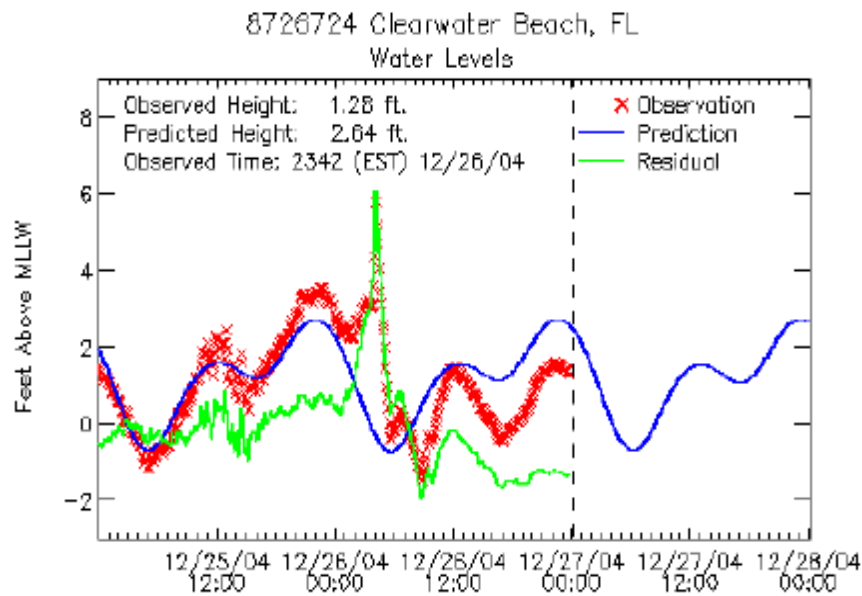


Figure 3. Tide gauge showing surge spike at Clearwater beach.

Links for more information:

<http://www.srh.noaa.gov/images/tbw/2004/StormyNightPunctuates.pdf>.

Acknowledgments: The National Weather Service, Tampa Bay Area.